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THE FUTURE
OF THE
HUMAN RACE.

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48.



THE
**Future of the Human
Race.**

Lectures

DELIVERED DURING THE SEASON OF ADVENT.

BY
ALFRED BOWEN EVANS, D.D.,
RECTOR OF ST. MARY-LE-STRAND.

LONDON:
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LECTURE I.

THE ORDERS OF THE SAVED.

REV. xxi. 9.

And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

TIME'S ever rolling wheel hath once more, as on this day, brought round to us the period, in sacred reckoning, when for six months to come, the minister of the Church, so far as that department of his office which consists in his "teaching and preaching the things of the kingdom of God" is concerned, is left, so far as himself is a faithful learner, with little or no choice of his subjects of discourse; those subjects being indicated to him by the annual recurrence, in commemoration, of those facts in the history of "the Author and

finisher of our faith," upon which are based the saving truths of the holy religion we profess. This plan, adopted by the Church, both as regards her pastors and her people, is one that is not without both its advantages and its disadvantages. It is not without its advantages, in that it provides, that once in the year, at least, every vital verity of the Christian system shall be, in its turn, prominently presented to the people's minds. It is not without its disadvantages, in that it by no means follows, that the pastor shall be in the best frame of mind for treating successfully any particular verity, when its turn cometh. Such uncertain creatures are we that it is quite as likely to be the reverse. The subjects which the preacher is likely to handle the most effectively, are not those that are chosen for him, but those he chooses. It hath often struck us, and a brother in the ministry lately agreed with us, in the remark, that probably the least interesting of the discourses we deliver, save so far as their themes render them otherwise, are some of those composed for special times and seasons. The sermons we make to order, so to say, are seldom the best that are made. The teaching, therefore, of the former half of the ecclesiastical year, demands at our hands all the greater

carefulness ; seeing that on it will rest the faith and the practice of the family for which our Lord "suffered death upon the cross," during the latter half. Soon indeed do the Seasons return. Soon does the end land us again at the beginning ; soon does the beginning speed us onward again to the end. No sooner, as we say, is it Advent Sunday than it seems to be Trinity ; no sooner is it Trinity than it seems to be Advent. While the preacher is choosing for himself a variety of topics for his weekly discourse, before he is aware of it, he is again brought face to face with that cycle of weeks which leaves him no choice. So it is, that life's sea bears us away the more swiftly, the greater are the number of its waves that have tossed themselves against the eternal shore. One wave makes room for another, and the many which have rolled by, leave but the freer channel for the few that are still surging towards the confines of the same land.

There is this characteristic of religious Truth that there is of none other ; that it is both definite and infinite : capable both of compression and expansion. In the few words of the Creed or the Catechism, this truth may be comprehended ; in the mighty volumes of an Augustine or an

Aquinas, this truth is not exhausted. It is wide as the heavens, narrow as its small sanctuary in the human breast. There is a broad way of stating Christian verities and there is a narrow. You may compress these verities, or expand them, as you will. The duty of the Pulpit, we take to be, to expand them, not to compress. The business of the preacher, is, as occasion serves, to map out the whole of the territory which the Lord God hath given to the children of men: it is so to delineate the features of the celestial landscape, that every traveller may be taken with one or more of them, if not with all; so to describe the offices and purposes of the kingdom of God in the earth, that every citizen of the same, may clearly identify his own place and prospects therein. We know of no subject that is capable of more compression, on the one side, or of more expansion, on the other, than the one brought before us by the return of this day; that of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to judge the world. The subject may be stated thus: that our Lord Jesus Christ, will, by and by, come back to judge the world, when He will summon all mankind before His bar, and dividing them into the two classes of the saved and the unsaved, shall assign the one class to

heaven for ever, and consign the other for ever to hell. To state it thus, is to compress the subject into its narrowest compass. And some of you may be inclined to say, "This is all we want to know about it, or can be required to believe." Whether this be all that *you* are required to *believe*, or not, of this we are persuaded, that it is not all that *we* are required to *teach*. Of the utmost importance is it that religious truth, if set forth at all, should be so set forth as to accord with the facts of natural observation. It is for want of this accordance, that we find so many about us who hold the facts to the rejection of the truth. We do not believe that the truth requires any forcible accomodation to the facts observed: it will be found, if rightly stated, just to agree with them. It must do so, or it is not what it professes to be. The only question is as to its method of statement. If properly stated, it will fall into harmony, at once, with all the facts of the world. Were we to assert, for instance, that this world of ours is so good a world, that it is difficult to meet with a bad man in it, we should simply contradict the facts of the case; or, were we to assert that the world is so bad a world, that it is scarcely possible to alight upon a good man in it.

we should equally contradict these facts : therefore would neither of these assertions, or these modes of statement, be true. In like manner, the common Theological statement, that the world is, or is to be, divided into but two classes, does not coincide with the facts of the case ; hence, this statement of the truth, as it purports to be, cannot be correct : there must be some other way of stating it, to bring it into agreement with the facts observed. We say, *is*, or *is to be*, divided,—because what is to be is dependent upon what is. If men be not divided into but two classes in this world, but will carry with them to the grave a much more multitudinous and intricate classification than this, we see no reason to conclude that they will fall into but two classes in the world to come. As a fact, then, the world is not divided into but two classes. It would simplify considerably our prospects of future retribution were it so : if we could say, “Here is a line of separation ; so many of mankind are on this side of the line, and all the rest on the other.” There is nothing in the world, however, which is less of a fact than this. And if observation convince us that the world is divided into many more classes than two, the Theological statement that it is, or is to be, (and if it be not, it

will not be,) divided into but two classes, needs revision. Neither two classes, nor two hundred, nor two thousand, will divide the human race. The idea suggested by the "judgment of quick and dead at Christ's appearing and His kingdom," is not that of classification, so much as that of individualism. Nothing will meet the facts of the case, or provide for the vast variety of class and character among mankind, but the declaration, which, though it be so plain, we seem, most of us, singularly unwilling to receive,—that "God will reward *every man* according to his works":¹ not every class of men merely, those of each class following each other in what they do,—not large parties of mankind, whose thinkings enable us to prognosticate their actions,—but each individual man, as if there were no other. "Every one of us shall give account of himself," his single, separate self, "unto God."²

If, then, the statement, that the whole of the race of Adam is divided into but two classes, does not accord with the facts of the world, we ask, first of all, what statement of the truth, that there is to be some division of the race, does accord with them? Far be it from us to "strive about

¹ St. Matt. xvi. 27.

² Romana xiv. 12.

words :" all we desire is, that we should understand them, when used. We may be reminded, that it seems to be a verity of the Gospel, that the world, at least, the Christian portion of it, will be divided into but two classes ; and may be referred to the picture drawn by our Lord, of "the sheep and the goats, on His right hand and on His left," or to other places of the Scripture. But without enquiring if this reference be altogether so pertinent as it might be, we repeat that we do not wish to quarrel about words. If it seem good to you to say that the whole world will be divided into but two classes, be it so ; but at least interpret the statement in accordance with what you see around you. Let there be but two classes into which the world is or will be divided : we have said this, very likely, as often as you. Have you, however, considered the numerous or innumerable classes into which both of these classes may themselves be subdivided, and are you duly impressed with this truth ? If so, you bring the truth into agreement with the facts of the world. If it be divided into two classes, these two classes are endlessly subdivided. This is the truth that agrees with the fact. You say, the two classes into which mankind are divided, are the saved and the lost. Be

they so : we ask, have you reflected how many orders and degrees there may be of both classes, especially of the saved ? This is the only reflection justified by the facts of the case. Do you know what is meant by being " saved, yet so as by fire "?¹ Do you define to yourself the difference between being " scarcely saved,"² and all but lost ? Is having " an abundant entrance into God's kingdom "³ the same thing as having a very straitened one ? It is difficult to know whence people gain their strange notions ; as, that the future state is a vast Democracy, where all will be equal, and every one at liberty to do as he likes : that the sinner of one sex, if she can persuade herself she is forgiven, when she can sin no longer, forthwith becomes a fit companion for the blessed Virgin ; and the transgressor of the other sex, if he can but depart comfortably, under the delusion that he has forsaken his vices, because his vices have forsaken him, is as suddenly transformed into a fit associate for St. Paul. There is nothing in holy Scripture that favours notions like these, and no right-minded person ought to favour them. There, we are plainly taught, if we be taught anything, that

¹ I Cor. iii. 15.

² I St. Peter iv. 18.

³ II St. Peter i. 11.

the ranks and degrees in the life to come will be quite as many and as various as in this; if not more so. “Every man in his own order.”¹

We ask, therefore, secondly, what are we to understand by the expression used in our text, as well as elsewhere in sacred Writ, “the bride” of Christ? The answer with which Christians generally would be ready to this question, would probably be, “By the bride is intended the whole multitude of the saved as distinguished from the unsaved.” Is this the true answer? We know not. By “the bride, the Lamb’s wife,” we understand, not all the saved as distinguished from the unsaved, but some of the saved as distinguished from the rest. We are continually putting upon sacred words more meaning than they will bear. To tell us that a man is saved, is not to tell us all that we wish to know, or that is to be known, about a man: nay, it is to tell us comparatively little about him. The whole company of the baptised are said to be in “a state of salvation, called thereto” by God: but does this fact give us any insight into the everlasting destiny of the whole of the baptised, or into the position of any one of them in the future kingdom of God? Salvation is

¹ I Cor. xv. 23.

treated in the Bible as a present blessing, rather than as a future boon; yet, we speak of a man's being saved as if it involved the certainty of his being glorified. We seem to forget, that a capacity for glorification hath to be begotten in the state of salvation, in order to his being glorified. We wish to know of a saved person, what kind of a saved person he is, and what, in and through the "state of salvation," he is becoming. But if, by being saved, you mean, just not being lost, this, we are sure, is not what St. John, or the angel that spake to him, means, by being "the bride, the Lamb's wife, ready to go in with Him to the marriage."¹ For, look for a moment, at the order in which this vision of "the bride" was vouchsafed to the seer: it was after the "binding of Satan for the thousand years," after the first and the last resurrections, after the universal judgment, after "the holy city, the new Jerusalem, had come down from God out of heaven."² Does not all this shew us how secret, how inner, how ultimate, how conclusive, the vision was? "Come hither," said the angel to St. John, after all these other visions had been beheld, "I will shew thee," as if by a great

¹ St. Matt. xxv. 10.

² Rev. xxi. 2.

favour, what he had not before seen, “the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” Now, whatsoever ideas beside, these expressions may convey to our minds, the prominent one we shall grant to be, that of the closest union to, and fellowship with, Christ, on the part of certain of our race. We shall grant, too, that the object of the religion we profess, is, to fit Christians for the everlasting society of their Lord, to be “the bride” of Jesus? But are all Christians fitted for this; we do not say, to see Christ, to be within reach of Christ, to be under the reign of Christ, but to be close to Christ, to be for ever in the confidence of Christ, to be “the Lamb’s wife”? O dear brethren, to ask such a question is to answer it. All Christians are not fitted for the everlasting society of Christ; and if all be not, only some will be: and those that are fitted for it will enjoy it. What, then, becomes of the notion entertained by so many, that if a man gets his sins pardoned, he is fit to be with Christ for ever? How is it with *you*? Is the fellow-creature, whom you forgive an injury he has done you, the one you immediately take to be your bosom friend, and whose fellowship you prefer to that of all other men? Why should you suppose it is so with Christ? How was it in the days of

His flesh? There was one out of whom He cast devils; and he besought Jesus "that he might be with Him: but Jesus suffered him not; but sent him home to his friends."¹ There was another whom He forgave, in the house of Simon. If she were, as some suppose, the Mary of Magdala, though we find her, subsequently, in much closer fellowship with her Lord, on that occasion she was told to "go in peace."² Three, mentioned by St. Luke, at the close of his ninth chapter,³ proposed of their own accord to follow Christ; but at that time he discouraged them all. In like manner, the one leper, out of the ten who were cleansed, who "returned to give glory to God, and whose faith had saved him,"⁴ does not appear to have been then admitted to more intimate fellowship with his Physician than the other nine.

Loudly, dear brethren, does a subject like this urge us to higher religious attainments. As loudly does it forbid us to rest satisfied with low ones; to suppose that forgiveness of sins, of itself, entitles us to heaven, that to be saved it is sufficient not to be lost, that to partake of the mercy of Christ fits us for the everlasting society of

¹ St. Mark v. 19.

² St. Luke vii. 50.

³ St. Luke ix. 57-62.

⁴ *Ibid.* xviii. 19.

Christ. O there is an outer circle of the redeemed, there is an inner circle, and there is a circle that is innermost. There is “the bride of the Lamb,” there are those who may be described as “the friends of the Bridegroom,” among the saved, there are those who are “*for*” Christ, and there are those that are “*not against*” Him. The ranks of spiritual and celestial society will be more plainly defined, in the end, than those of society, civil and social, now are: not by arbitrary decree, but in the very nature of things. Think of the coarse Theology that satisfies the many; is it possible to make it accord with the refined Theology that alone satisfies the few? As little will the persons accord. Nothing is there in the Gospel to hinder us from being of the number of those who will be “the bride” of Christ. If we ask, who they are that will “go in with Christ to the marriage,” Christ tells us in the parable, that they will be “those who are ready:” and if we ask, how they will be ready, this book tells us; for when “the marriage of the Lamb is come, His wife” will have “*made* herself ready.”¹

¹ Rev. xix. 7.

LECTURE II.

THE SAVED NATIONS.

REV. xxi. 24.

And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

THERE are some awful reflections by which a serious mind cannot well avoid being arrested, in its survey of the religious and moral condition of the world in which we live. One such reflection is expressed on this wise, by a writer in a comparatively recent number of one of our larger *Reviews*,¹ of a strongly Neological tendency, that “there is with the Lord Almighty, the knowledge of a widely spread danger of damnation among mankind, which He uses no efforts to avert.” This is an awful reflection, no doubt. Of course, this

¹ The National.

writer, whosoever he be, could not have been expected to put it down in the least offensive way, and he has not done so: still, the reflection, is, on the whole, not unjust. How widely spread the danger is of which he speaks God alone knoweth; that it is spread widely *we* must know as well as God: and that beyond the means adopted “through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus,” which are all-sufficient, and which the writer seems to overlook, it must be confessed that God does use no efforts to avert it. Without in any degree giving way to uncharitableness, we think, that looking at the world as we find it, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion, that if there be a damnation to be in danger of, large numbers of our race must be in danger of it; that if there be a hell to go to, vast multitudes of the children of men must be going to it; that if there be an “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power,”¹ huge crowds of mankind cannot but be hastening to that very destruction. We say it is impossible to avoid these conclusions, looking at this world of ours as we find it. And these conclusions, be it observed, we are under the sad necessity of referring, not to

¹ II Thess. i. 9.

the worst portions, or the outcasts of mankind, those neglected, as it would seem, and uncared for, by God and their fellows,—but to those accounted good, the elect of mankind, as they would be taken to be, those upon whom the remedial influences of “the Gospel of the grace of God” have been directly and plenarily brought to bear. What we have said, is unhappily as applicable, at first sight, to Christendom, as to those parts of the world where Christianity hath not been heard of; if not more so: for, as we should “not have known sin but by the law,”¹ so we should not have known destruction but for “the Gospel of our salvation.” Now, these conclusions that we are forced to form are the very conclusions we should not wish to form, if we could help it. Surely, it can afford us no satisfaction to think that the vast majority of the human race are to be lost for ever. None of us would endorse the sentiment of a fierce Theology, that the happiness of the saved will be increased by their beholding the misery of the damned. And yet, that there is a widely spread danger of damnation, is not merely the ill-natured dictum of a Theological misanthrope, it is an axiom that lies at the foundation of every entreaty addressed

¹ Rom. viii. 7.

to men, by the heralds of the Cross, to flee from "the wrath to come." Still, what we should desire to hear, is, not that there are few that will be saved, but few that will be lost: but looking at the state of the world, at any time, we do, as we before hinted, seem to be shut up to the former conclusion rather than to the latter. And if it be so, that the lost, will, at length, outnumber the saved, how are we to avoid this more terrible conclusion, that the devil, will, in the end, be stronger than God, or Christ weaker than anti-christ? We know, indeed, that we adopt various modifications of these conclusions; we try to soften their sternness. Thus, granting, that vast multitudes of our race are, to all appearance, pressing forward to perdition, we are little disposed to give place to the idea that our own relations or friends are among the number. The mother cannot permit herself to believe that her child, nor the wife that her husband, nor the sister that her brother, can be among the lost. We find it hard to realise the possibility of those who have been so close to us here being separated from us for ever hereafter. Be the rule what it may we form a long list of exceptions. But after all, these are only sentimentalisms, they come to us with no authority;

they go not to the root of the matter. If some will be lost, we cannot suppose that none will be but those to whose salvation we are indifferent. As little will it assist us out of our difficulty, to be told, that there are but two classes in the world; that if a man be not saved, he is lost, that if he be not lost, he is saved. We are anxious to know, not what any one says about so awful a matter as this, except God Himself, Who is truth and love. What does God say about it in His Word? does He say anything about it, or nothing. Granting this widely spread danger of damnation of which we have spoken, is it so great a danger, or is it a danger so widely spread, as at first we deem it to be? Above all, is there no place in the Scriptures which will assist us, without in the slightest measure leading us to think lightly of sin, or to detract from its consequences, to revise the notion, which tacitly or confessedly seems to underlie so much of our teaching, that the lost will outnumber the saved, and that Satan, will, in the end, claim for his possession, more souls than Christ; a notion, which we have intimated throughout, the state of the world, at all seriously regarded, offers too many facts to confirm? Those who assure us, that immediately after death, every

human being is adjudged to heaven for ever, or for ever to hell, and that between the heights of glory and the depths of perdition there is no middle way, are powerless in an enquiry like this: they must for ever hold their peace. God knows with how great care we would deal with so solemn a subject; but deal with it we must, or others will deal with it for us, far less carefully. It is impossible to look at mankind through a religious medium, without having the question painfully and constantly pressed upon us, What is to become of them all in the everlasting future?

Now, it is with the view to obtain some kind of solution of enquiries such as these, that we wish to solicit your attention to the passage we selected as our text, out of the same chapter from which we chose that of last week. That it is selected out of the book of the Revelation, is much in its and our, favour, for that the book *is* a revelation. It is confessedly an appendage to the whole revealed will of God in the rest of the New Testament, treating of subjects not so distinctly opened in the former portions of the Evangelical record. There are three points brought before us in this passage worthy of regard. First, it speaks of "the nations of them which are saved;"

secondly, it tells us, that these nations are to "walk in the light" of something or of somebody, —a light, at any rate, not their own; and thirdly, that "the kings of the earth are to bring their glory and honour to the same light." "The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it."

First, "the nations of them which are saved," or, simply, "the nations;" giving to the expression the widest possible scope. At the least, we must interpret it to mean, nations or races not lost; nations whose end is not "the blackness of darkness," but a graduation of light. We may probably be told that "the nations of them which are saved" signify some persons saved out of all nations; we, however, take them to mean, whole nations saved. The word here used¹ is the same word that is made use of in the 25th chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, where the "gathering of all nations" before "the Son of man" to judgment is spoken of. We cannot but think that the word here, as there, refers chiefly to the nations that will be upon earth at the period of Christ's return. The judgment described by St. Matthew

¹ τὰ ἔθνη.

is one, which, while it includes Christians, does not exclude Pagans. The grounds of the acceptance or the rejection of those judged, being, not so much aught that is distinctively evangelical, as, so to say, "good Samaritanism," or its absence. The astonishment of some of those brought to that trial, at being apprised, that the mercies they had shewn to their brethren of mankind, they had shewn to Him Who will be their Judge, and the astonishment of others, that they had refused the like mercies to their Judge in not having shewn them to their brethren, and His, seem to point to numbers whom we cannot well regard as really, if, nominally, Christian, or they could not have been ignorant of these rudiments of their religion ; though whether Christian or not, the humanity of the Judge is identified with that of them all. Our text, then, teaches us, that there are "nations of them which are saved ;" or saved nations. We believe that the whole of the nations into which the Roman empire was broken up, together with those races which, since the discovery of Columbus, have populated the opposite hemisphere, may be described as saved nations. Their inhabitants, for the major part, consisting of baptised men and women, have been called to a state of salvation ;

while, through the presence of "the Gospel of salvation" in their midst, they actually *are* saved from a multitude of errors and vices in which they would otherwise be entangled. Not that there will be no lost souls in these nations, but that the nations, as such, will be saved, though judged. We think that the expressions "the nations of them which are saved," point to that large class of human beings, every where, if, indeed, not to allude to exceptions, some countries have, for the more part, any other class, of which we sometimes say, "they seem not good enough for heaven, nor bad enough for the other place;" the very class of which we are prompted to ask, What is to become of them in the future world? Our text seems to relieve our anxiety about them; for these be they, if any, who will be found among "the nations of the saved:" *saved*, we say, though *judged*. If you ask us the difference between saved nations and others, we cannot but remark, that in nations not Christian, there will be *persons* that will be saved; for St. Peter, while as yet no nation, as such, had been called to salvation, but the Jews, who rejected the call, declared, that "in every nation he that feared God, and worked

righteousness, was accepted with Him.”¹ And these *persons* that are saved, out of the *nations* that are *not* saved, will, as we understand it, be incorporated, under the government of the Messiah, with the nations that *are* saved. Of course, every thing depends upon the sense we attach to saved nations. If we confound saved nations with glorified saints, or suppose that the nations of the saved constitute “the bride, the Lamb’s wife,” our reasoning will be of no avail. We believe that the passage before us, were there no other, was written to obviate the possibility of any such confusion on our parts. Here, at least, the distinction between the saved nations and the glorified saints is most carefully kept in view. Hence, we observe,

Secondly, that it is said here, that these “nations of them which are saved” will “walk,” live, have their characteristics perpetuated, enjoy their well-being, so far as they are capable of it, in a certain light; for with light alone is the possibility of life, whether animal or vegetable, natural or spiritual, earthly or heavenly: and darkness is one with death. “The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it.”

¹ *Acts x. 34, 35.*

It is a borrowed light; a light not their own. Whose light? what light? Primarily, of course, it must be the light of Christ, for as there is no light in the natural world, without the sun, so is there no light in the world of spirits, without Christ, Who is the Sun of that sphere. In the immediate context, we are told of a "city, which had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb was the light thereof."¹ In the city, we are further told, "no temple" was seen by the apocalyptic prophet, "for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."² What the city is, whence its origin, of what or of whom it is builded, we are informed earlier in the chapter. The seer, we are told, saw "a new heaven and a new earth," "according to the promise" of God, declared by his "brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, Simon the son of Jonas."³ How this was brought to pass we are also told. St. John "saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."⁴ When it

¹ Rev. xxi. 23.

² *Ibid.* 22.

³ II St. Peter iii. 13.

⁴ *Ibid.* 2.

had come down, he “heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, *and be* their God.”¹ It is impossible not to identify this “holy city, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband,” with “the bride, the Lamb’s wife,” afterwards shewn unto him, and of whom we were speaking last week. St. John, clearly referring to the bride spoken of subsequently by the angel, sets forth in vision, what St. Paul depicts in prophecy: that at the latter day, “the Lord Jesus will descend from heaven”² with His holy ones, who will be joined by “the excellent of the earth,” who will be “caught up together to meet” them; and they, in rapturous union with each other and with Him, will compose the city of God, a city of glorified saints in the world, the bride of the Father’s only begotten Son. The seer then goes on to describe the tangible grandeur of the city, its walls, its gates, its foundations, its gold, its jewels: still he declares it to have “descended out of heaven from God.” Further, as we have seen, he tells us, that the inhabitants of the city, the glorified

¹ Verse 3.

² I Thess. iv. 16, 17.

saints, will walk in “the light of God and of the Lamb;” and in the text, that “the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of *it*,” *i.e.*, of the city, whose light is “the glory of God and of the Lamb.” Plainly, then, there is a distinction between the saved nations and the glorified saints. They who walk in the light of others, are not one with that light, nor the same as those whose light it is. The light of the saved nations compared with that of “the holy city,” may be as the light of the moon to that of the sun; some of such nations may be so distant from the Sun of the city of God, as to be in comparative twilight: but, nevertheless, none shall be in total darkness. All these things point to a glorious reconstruction of human society, in the ages to come, under Christ as its Head, and His saints as its administrators: a blessed amalgamation of the seen and the unseen, when, through the presence of the Lord God and of the Lamb, earth will be in heaven, and heaven upon earth.

Thirdly, we are told, that “the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into” the city, “in whose light the nations of them which are saved are to walk.” On this portion of the text, after what we have said, we shall add little,

though we might have much to add. The words do but shew in what high estimation the saints of God will be held, when they will have a city of their own, compared with that in which they are held now, when they have no city, but "seek one," this very one, "to come."¹ Then will those prophecies receive their glorious fulfilment which we vainly endeavour to accommodate to the tarnished glories of the Church as she now is. As if to anticipate an objection as to how such vast multitudes could dwell on this globe, we are told that in "the new earth," there will be "no more sea;"² though we have no right to suppose, that spiritual bodies will require the same extension as natural ones.

We ought, dear brethren, I think, to be deeply thankful to the Holy Ghost, for a revelation like the one we have been examining. It ought to rejoice us greatly, to know, that the lost will be fewer than we feared; that the perdition of mankind will not be so wide as we deemed; that the damned will never outnumber the saved. It should give us solid joy, to feel, that God will be able to do something for many, who are doing so little for themselves, that He will be able to

¹ Heb. xiii. 14.

² Verse 1.

make something, of those of whom we can make nothing ; that He will find room in His kingdom for thousands, for whom we might find none : and, that while we may be dreading lest His great house of the future, like many a place of worship now, should be half empty, He will take care that it shall be completely full. If these things do not give us joy, whosoever may be lost, it is difficult to understand how *we* can hope to be saved.

LECTURE III.

THE BINDING OF SATAN.

REV. XX. 1, 2.

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

WHENCE get we the notion, that he whom we call the Devil, the being for whom almost every nation has its name, and whose existence, in some shape or other, almost every people recognises, is the worst of all beings in the universe of God ; going far beyond all other creatures of His, (for it must not be forgotten that this being is as much one of God's creatures as ourselves,) both in the potentialities and actualities of depravity ? We suppose it must be taken for granted that this is the notion of most of us. It appears to be

so from the way in which we speak of this being ; from the things which, without compunction, we lay to his charge ; from the facts, that nothing seems to us to be too bad wherewith to incriminate him ; that we are constantly in the habit of excusing ourselves and one another, by accusing *him* ; and, that if aught that is more than usually atrocious is done upon earth, we set him down as the doer thereof. Whence, we ask, get we these notions ? Have we taken them up, like many other notions of our's, without due consideration ? Have we enquired how far they may or may not be "according to the Scriptures" ? In the Scriptures we learn, that an unfallen archangel had, once upon a time, a dispute with this fallen one ; but we are told that the former "brought against" the latter "no railing accusation."¹ He did not treat him as too many of us would be disposed to do ; thinking it quite lawful to say anything against him, howsoever vituperative, judging him to be what he is. Neither in the controversy held with Satan, on the affairs of God's servant Job, do we find that he was rashly accused, though he took the place of an accuser. And if we

¹ St. Jude v. 9.

revert to the dread encounter with this adversary, in the wilderness of Judæa, on the part of Him Who was “manifested that He might destroy his works”¹ in the world, we call to mind, at once, the dignity and calmness of the divine Conqueror in that conflict ; and again, the absence of all accusation against the foe, such as we might bring. Indeed, everywhere in the Bible, this being is referred to with all solemnity. There is a reverence which is due to even ruin, considering the antecedent glory of the nature involved in it, and the height from which that nature fell. A fallen archangel is a being neither to be libelled nor laughed at. There is a disposition in vast numbers of the children of Adam, in respect of Satan, to do both ; to treat him either with “railing accusation,” or with ridicule. We may think and speak of the Devil as the worst being in the universe of God, if we will ; I think it would be hard for us to prove from the Scriptures, that the Devil, is, in himself, or is therein regarded, as worse than many *men*. Certain it is, that there are some sins which a fallen man may commit which a fallen spirit cannot. With awful truth, too, hath it been

¹ I St. John iii. 8.

said, that if, looking at the bounties and beauties of Nature, we need have little doubt of the existence of a God, looking at the selfishness and depravity of man, we need have less doubt as to the existence of a Devil. The footprints of Satan are to be too plainly tracked on the sands of time. But, that bad angels, though they may possess greater powers of mischief, are of necessity worse than bad men, does not appear to us to be taught in the Scriptures. "Have not I chosen you twelve," said our Lord to His disciples, "and one of you is a devil?"¹ Do we not read more than once of men who are "the children of the devil"?² And, indeed, though we have ceased to believe in demoniacal possession of human beings, in the form in which it existed before our Lord came into the world, (the Devil having more power then than he has now, as he hath more power now than, blessed be the "King Who shall reign in righteousness")³ he will have by and by,) because we do not see it,—we still credit a demoniacal possession that is moral. We do not scruple to speak of bad men as devils

¹ St. John vi. 70.

² *Ibid.* viii. 44. St. Matt. xiii. 38, 39.

³ Isaiah xxxii. 1.

incarnate, and of tempers, propensities, actions, and habits, that are devilish ; so far contradicting the notion that Satan is necessarily the worst of beings, and justifying the Bible in its silence on any such point. If it be possible for humanity to be devilish, as we fear it is, there may be a hope that hereafter it may be possible for much of devilism to become human. We may be reminded, that the epithets heaped upon this foe of God and man, in our text, would seem to shew that he is the worst of beings. He is called here, "the dragon, that old serpent, the Devil, and Satan"; "the dragon" for his tyranny, perhaps, the serpent for his subtilty, the Devil for his falsity, the Satan for his enmity: for such is the meaning of the last two epithets, enemy, and false accuser. But is it any new thing for wicked men, whether in sacred language or secular, to be compared for their iniquities, to beasts or to reptiles ; or are the attributes here ascribed to Satan such as can in no wise be ascribed unto men ? Are there no *men* that are dragons for cruelty, and serpents for deception ? Are there no tyrants in the world, whether in public or private life, whose subjects *rejoice that they have not more power*, seeing

the use which they make of the power they have! Are there no serpentine, treacherous human beings, who scarcely ever do a straightforward action, or utter a plainly-intentioned word? Are there no slanderers in the world, who will raise all manner of false accusations against their neighbours, but were scarcely ever known to have retracted one? And finally, are there no men of Satanic disposition upon earth, whose "hand is against every man, and every man's hand," for mere self-defence, "against them"?¹ If such men be not so many social or national devils, who can be? The epithets heaped upon Satan, therefore, in the text, we take to be, not epithets of abuse, (for they are but too applicable to vast multitudes of men,) but of identification. They serve to point out who he is, and what he is doing, to whom that will hereafter be done, which the seer goes on to foretell. And it is not in order to degrade men, or to apologise for Satan, or to unsettle any of your previous principles, that we have spoken as we have, but to lead you on to the vision here set down, that you may perceive how possible of fulfilment it is.

¹ Genesis xvi. 12.

There are questions that press heavily upon us in relation to this subject. If the Devil, whether or not the worst being in the dominions of the Supreme, is the wicked being we know him to be, and the instigator of so much wickedness in other creatures, therefore a most miserable being,—how does it consist with the goodness of the divine Being to keep him in existence? Why should God preserve alive so awful an opposite of His blessed Self? I answer, that the test of misery is the desire of annihilation. Now, it is not revealed to us, that Satan, wicked though he be, and miserable, because wicked, as all that are wicked must be, wishes to be annihilated; that he would rather not be than be: and if existence to him, being what it is, be preferable, after all, to non-existence, we do not see that it militates in any way against the Divine benevolence, for God to keep him in, or not to put him out of, existence, since, what he is, he hath made himself to be, after God had made him, like us, “upright.”¹ Were it otherwise, there would be a difficulty; though even then, perhaps not an insuperable one. Our Lord said of Judas, who betrayed Him, “Good had it been

¹ Ecclesiastes vii. 29.

for that man if he had not been born";¹ but this does not amount to saying, that having been born, and done this deed, it would have been better for him to cease to be. And this that was said of the betrayer is no more than might be said of too many of the sons and daughters of Adam; yea, of every one who goes out of this world in unrepented transgression. We may be asked, again, why, for the sake of the human race, whose relentless foe, and whose untiring tempter he is, does not the Almighty blot out Satan from the universe of being? We do not know what right we have to ask a question like this; still, if we do ask it, there is an answer to it to be educed from the words of our text. These words go straight to this very subject. They disclose to us something that God is, hereafter, going to do to this great adversary, for our sakes; and with this grand prospect before us of what God will do in the future, it does not become us to ask, why, in addition to all He hath already done, He hath not done something else in the past. We are no judges of anything that is fitting for God to do, till God hath done it. Then, when it is done, it will be seen to be the

¹ St. Matt. xxvi. 24.

most fitting thing that God could do. God always does what is best, and what will last, because it is best. Questions of the kind we have referred to really amount to this,—Why does not God, by direct interposition, or in a summary manner, put down all the evil there is in the world? The reply to this is close at hand: God is seeking to put down evil in our hearts, and in the world, in a way, with which any proceeding of such a sort would be altogether at variance. The means God is making use of are moral, not miraculous. Should they fail, wholly, or in part, through our lack of fidelity to them, then will it be time for the Most High to interfere; and He will do so. God now allows us, in this state of trial, to take His part against the Devil, or the Devil's part against Him. When the world will have done the latter once too often, God will arise, and take His own part against both.

We have thus, led you up, dear brethren, to the testimony borne to this matter, by the seer, in the language of the text. We have here, then, a Fact of the Future declared, and the Result of the fact stated.

First, here is a Fact of the Future declared.

“I saw an angel,” writes “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” “come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.” Without enquiring whether these thousand years signify a definite or an indefinite period, what is here revealed unto us is clearly this; that at some period in the future, and for a very long time when that era comes, the power of Satan will be destroyed in the earth, and the adversary himself placed under the strongest restraint. This power is not now nearly so great as it was before the advent of Him Who came to “take away the sin of the world”;¹ but it will be infinitely less than it now is, when Christ shall have “reigned, till He hath put all enemies under His feet”:² as it is expressed in the text, Satan will be “bound,” taken captive, “shut up” in prison. God, the all-mighty, the all-holy, the all-loving, whom men call upon directly to interfere, to cast out all evil from His terrestrial dominions, while they themselves, did they use the means already in their hands, might put an

¹ St. John i. 29.

² 1 Cor. xv. 25.

end to by far the larger proportion of that evil, will sooner or later interfere, and eject sin, and death, and “him that hath, through sin, the power of death, even the Devil,”¹ from this sphere of His habitable universe. How soon this may be we know not; but that it will not be before we Christians learn to bewail our own inability to put evil away from the midst of us, through our faithlessness to the blessed system under which God hath graciously placed us, as we have never yet done, we may be all but sure. The Most High, for our correction, will let us see how little we have brought ourselves to be able to do, ere “He ariseth to shake terribly the earth”² from the iniquities and corruptions of its past ages. And we must take notice that the epithets here used, “serpent, the Devil, and Satan,” are not personal merely, but collective names. They are the names not of a power, only, but of *powers*: they describe a host. As Christ is the head of a body, so is he, whose “head Christ came to bruise.” The serpent hath a seed, the Devil, children, Satan, emissaries. As good men, in the invisible state, become angels, so do bad men become devils. That

¹ *Heb. ii. 14, 15.*

² *Isaiah ii. 19.*

there are human devils, as well as angelic ones, we have already seen : that there are human angels, as well as angels that have never lived in the body, we may as readily see ; for the angel that spake to St. John, refused to be worshipped by the seer, on the ground that he was the apostle's "fellow-servant, and of those that had the testimony of Jesus."¹ It appears, therefore, that this "binding of Satan," here declared, is not the binding of a single fallen archangel, so called, but the captivity of a legion ; this shutting up of the Devil, is not only the shutting up of the one great "adversary" by that name, but it is really the imprisonment of "every enemy which hath done evil in God's sanctuary"² of the human heart. Every devil, devils of every kind and degree, social, sensual, political and theological, cantic and blaspheming devils, will all be confined, when the "old serpent" is chained. The king being taken, all his soldiers will be prisoners. They who will be the first and the chief to experience the blessed advantages of this mighty interposition of the Lord God of our salvation, will be those "nations of the saved," of which we were

¹ Rev. xix. 10.

² Psalm lxxiv. 3.

speaking last Sunday. These nations, will, through this final “leading of captivity captive,” be delivered from those malignant influences, to which, notwithstanding their profession of the religion of Christ, they are still so largely subject; so that out of them, in the ages to come, may be born multitudes of saints who may be glorified, though their inhabitants, for the more part, at present, rank little higher than respectable nondescripts.

Secondly, we revert to the Results of this “binding of Satan.” He is to be “laid hold of,” we are here told, “bound,” “shut up,” by an angel of God that is stronger than he, (stronger than he, because holier and more loyal,) “for a thousand years, and to have a seal set upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled.” The last thing, perhaps, in the Creation, that we should think of, would be the possibility of a harmless Devil. As “the Devil sinned from the beginning,”¹ we suppose he must go on sinning to the end, as if the adorable Lord kept Satan, and wicked men, in existence for ever, only that they might sin. But if what we have said be true, there will not only

¹ I St. John iii. 8.

be one harmless Devil, in the ages to come, but very many such; yea, all beings shall become harmless that ever did harm: harmless, we say, but not happy; for that would not be consistent with the harm they had previously done. "They shall not hurt, nor destroy, in all God's holy mountain."¹ God shall wear out those that "wore out the saints of the Most High."² The time of this captivity of the adversary is most definitely fixed by the seer, between the first and the general resurrections. And as if to let the world see the difference between the state of things when God shall take to Himself His great power against the adversary, and that in which men are left to battle with him, by the help of God's grace, as best they may, it is said, that "after the thousand years are finished, he is to be loosed for a little season";³ till he is finally shut up, "and death and hell, or hades, are cast into the lake of fire: which is the second death."⁴

Truly, dear brethren, this subject does open before us a prospect in the future, every way worthy of "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." He Who "was manifested that He might

¹ Isaiah xi. 9.

³ Rev. xx. 3, 7.

² Daniel vii. 25, 26.

⁴ Rev. xx. 14.

destroy the works of the devil," must ultimately do so, or His work will not be done. Satan may now be rendered harmless by resisting him ; (all tyrants are cowards, and so is he,) but eventually he will be harmless, for there will be no need to resist. If to some it seem as if the Devil were more busy and more powerful now than of yore, as if the world did but wax worse as it waxed older, and as if the vices and villainies of society did but increase with its civilization,—the seer, in this book, will give us a reason even for this ; to wit, that Satan hath "*great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.*"¹

¹ Rev. xii. 12.

LECTURE IV.

THE JUDGEMENT BOOKS.

REV. XX. 12.

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

How close is the relation which men and books bear to each other! So close is it, that it may be said they all but form a unity. Men are one with books, books one with men. They are inseparables. In either are the constituents of both. Between them is the sum-total of the moral world. If, as Solomon said, “of making many books there is no end,”¹—for to make any book was at that time of day a great labour,—quite as true is it, that but for the many books which have been

¹ Eccles. xii. 12.

made, as to every higher and nobler department of life, in a word, as to everything which can distinguish the existence of mankind from that of the creatures beneath them, there had long ago been an end of the world. Nay, more, we may say, that a man is a book, and a book, in some sort, a man. A man is an active book, and a book is but a passive man. The book can talk with us, though it keep silence; it can sympathise with the reader, though it gives no sign. Those are not the only books that are written with ink, neither are they the only readers who have learned to spell. He Who made the first book is the God Who made all things, and the same God is He Who will unchain from His throne, and promulgate the awful contents of, the last. The universe itself is but a book written with the finger of the Almighty, which angels and men were created to peruse. A book of "beauty" is it, "a joy" to all intelligences "for ever," graven with pen of precious metal, on leaves of glistening rock, bound with soft enamel, ornamented with a title-page of dazzling light, and clasps of starry jewels. Human character, again, is a volume, which, though far from being committed universally to *letter-press*, we are always engaged in reading;

an earnest that it will hereafter be re-read to us, by One Who can make no mistake in the beginning, and Who will have no need to insert a page of errata at the end. No marvel is it to us, as it seems to be to those who wish to set the universe at variance with the Bible, that the Most High should, "in these last days," have "spoken" unto us by a Book, which everywhere speaketh of His Son, seeing that through books, men are continually speaking to one another,—the dead to the living, as well as the living to those that are alive. Of him who hath written a book that lives, still more if it be a book that deserves to live, is it as true as it is of the one who offered the first acceptable sacrifice, when there were but two upon earth with their parent to offer, that "he being dead yet speaketh."¹ Hard is it, yea, impossible to believe of the book that liveth, that its author hath perished; or, that "the Father of lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,"² ever kindled a glorious human intellect for the mere pleasure of having to put it out again. As little are we surprised to find, that in the judgement of all the dead, "at Christ's appearing and His kingdom," whether they have slept in

¹ Heb. xi. 4.

² St. James i. 17.

beds of earth, or been rocked to slumber in cradles of the ocean,—books will hold so prominent a place. When the seer declares to us, that in addition to all that had before been revealed unto him, he “saw the dead, small and great, stand before God,” Whose throne of peerless purity he had just beheld set for the earth’s final assize,—it seems to us the most natural of all things that he should add, “and the books were opened: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

In closing these our Advent discourses, for another year, we have thought that it would be desirable in itself, as well as serve, in some measure, to give a completeness to our previous subjects, if we solicited your attention to these books of judgement, referred to in our text; and indeed, to any other book or books, of which mention may be made, in the book of this prophecy. We wish to do this, because we fear that there is a large amount of confusion abroad as to these books; about what they are, and how many classes they are: just as there is confusion abroad as to the orders of the saved nations, and the *glorified saints*, in the one, universal kingdom of

God. It is no new thing, in the interpretation of Scripture, to confound sameness of sound with identity of sense. We are afraid that this is what takes place in the instance before us. There are two descriptions of books spoken of in these words: there are, first of all, what are called "*the books*"; then there is "another book, which is the book of life"; and "out of" both these descriptions of books "the dead" are said to be "judged, according to their works." But there is yet, we think, a third book spoken of elsewhere; to wit, "the Lamb's book of life." Out of this book, we are not aware, as we are certainly not informed, so far as we can perceive, that any are to be judged; though, according to the names that are recorded therein, myriads will be glorified, or have various stations assigned to them in the realms of glory. But here it is, as we imagine, that the confusion we have noticed creeps in. Persons read of "the Lamb's book of life," or of "the book of life," simply, without mention of Him Whose book it is, and they conclude it to be the same book as "the book of life" to which reference is made in the text. It is to such a conclusion as this that we should demur; and our reasons for doing so will appear, as we go on. While we have no occasion

to regard these books from so literal a point of view, as to suppose them to be so many volumes of leaves, bound together between covers, we have also no occasion to regard them from a point of view so purely tropical, as to decide that they signify nothing that bears any resemblance to what is called a book. We wish to offer you a few remarks as to each of these descriptions of books, in the order we previously laid down ; but before we do this, we would ask your attention for a moment or two, to the nature of the judgement here described by St. John.

This judgement, then, is emphatically that of the dead ; of those, who, having died, will have been raised from the dead, to participate therein. "I saw the dead," writes the prophet, "small and great," probably referring to those who had been of great reputation, while in the world, and those, who, while in the world, had been of little or no reputation ; or, it may be to those, who, on the one hand, "died in their full age," and to those, on the other, who were "taken away from the evil to come," in childhood or youth,—"stand before God ; and they were judged out of the things written in the books." Again, in the next verse, "*The sea gave up the dead which were in it* ; and

death and hades delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to his works.”¹ In a word, not one of the dead left in their graves, after the final rapture of the saints, will be missing at that last trial. This judgement of the dead must be carefully distinguished from the retribution of the living, spoken of elsewhere. The two trials occur at different eras; the one at the commencement of the thousand years’ reign, the other at its close. We appear to speak, at times, as if the judgement of the living, would be the judgement of but a few forlorn stragglers on the terrestrial shore, in company with the whole army of the resurrected dead. We, in fact, with the poet, have visions of a “last man”; whereas, the judgement of the quick, in which the risen and returning saints will take a part, will be the judgement of “all nations,”² as St. Matthew declares: nations many more then, through the future increase and migration of the earth’s inhabitants, than that scrutiny would or could include, were it to take place now, and nations, also, not then born. The saints once raised, we may be sure, will not die again; and the saints once changed, at the rising of the rest,

¹ Verse 13.

² St. Matt. xxx. 32.

will not die at all : but that there will be no death among "the nations of them which are saved," during the millennial age, we have no reason to believe. "Death," we are told, in a subsequent verse, with "hades," is to be "cast into the lake of fire ; the second death";¹ *i.e.*, death itself is to see its own death, through the conquering power of the death of Him, Who is "the resurrection and the life :" but this is not to be till the end of "the dispensation of the fulness of times." If so, then multitudes of the saved nations will rise from the grave, with "the rest of the dead, who will not live again," as the seer tells us before, "until the thousand years are finished ;" while during those thousand years, many out of such nations will have "purchased to themselves" a far higher degree in "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," than they had attained ere that age set in. At first, they were found meet to be saved ; at last, they may be found meet to be glorified. There is this singularity, however, about the revelation that some of the dead will rise at the beginning, the rest at the end of the thousand years, that the full consciousness of immortality, with some of our race,

¹ Verse 14.

if we may speak of it in relation to time, will be centuries longer than that of others.

Turn we now, my dear hearers, to consider the books of judgement, here referred to.

First, "the books." "The books were opened." The expression points to more books than one. Be they, however, many or few, "the dead are to be judged out of the things written in the books, according to their works." The way in which the judgement is to be conducted, would appear to be, by bringing what is written in these books into comparison with the contents of "another book," called here, "the book of life"; out of which, no less than out of the other books, men are to be judged. What, then, are the books first mentioned? We do not think, that there is much difficulty in ascertaining what these first mentioned books are, with the book of God for our guide. It is clear, they are authoritative books; books that will form standards in the judgement to come. We should, first of all, fix upon the book of Conscience or natural Law, as one of them. St. Paul asserts, that this book will be sufficient for the acquittal or the condemnation, in the judgement, of all those to whom hath been vouchsafed no other. They who have had no other,

will, we may be very sure, be judged solely by the one they had ; and this which they had will suffice for their sentence. The almighty and merciful Lord hath legibly written certain laws in the natural constitutions of His rational creatures, and graven in their moral beings the character of those penalties which are attached to the violation of such laws : this is one of "the books which will be opened" in the last day, and out of it will millions of the dead be judged at the last assize. We should name, secondly, the law of Moses, as another of "the books which will be opened" in the judgement of the dead. "Whatsoever things this law saith," as any other, "we know that it saith to them who are under this law."¹ As no one who was left only to the law of Nature, will be judged by the law of Moses, so, no one who was under the law of Moses, will be judged as though he had been left only to the law of Nature. The law of Moses is for the Jew, who "made his boast in that law,"² not for the Heathen who never came under it ; and by it, in addition to the law of Nature, will the Jew be judged. Then, thirdly, as you will anticipate, we mention the Gospel, or Law of Christ, as the

¹ *Rom. iii. 19.*

² *Ibid. ii. 17, 23.*

other of “the books.” “Whatsoever things” the Gospel “saith,” it saith to them “that are under the” Gospel. As no Pagan, and no pre-evangelical Jew, will be judged by the Gospel, so no Christian can be judged without the Gospel. None who have been under the Gospel can ever be treated as though they had not been under it. It will thus be seen, that these “books which will be opened” in the judgement, will be more or less familiar to those who will have to abide the trial; that they will afford no new disclosures as to the nature or the desert of mortal guilt and transgression. At least, so far as we Christians are concerned, it is certain we can know nothing more about these matters, than the Incarnation, the Passion, the Agony, and the Cross of Christ, have already told us and all worlds. Such being “the books,” we have to enquire,

Secondly, what is the *book*? “Another book was opened, which is the book of life:” and out of this book no less than out of the former ones, it is said, the dead will be judged. What is this other book? We have before intimated, that any difficulty in deciding what this book is, arises from the supposition, that words in God’s volume which have the same sound must always have the same

sense. Did we take our ideas from, instead of carrying them to, the Bible, many of our difficulties of interpretation would disappear. Reading in this connection, of “another book, which is the book of life,” but that we do so with a preconceived notion, I think we should not be likely to confound it with that book, in which is recorded the everlasting destinies of the redeemed. Taking the words as they stand, “another,”¹ not *the* other, “another book, which is the book of life,” can only mean the book of human existence; the book of their life who will be brought to trial: the book of your life, and of my life, and of the life of all those that will be judged. This book will be set side by side with the other books; and what is “written” in the other books will be compared with the blots and scrawls, or the fair epistles of Christ, in this. Of what use would it be to open “the books,” if this “book of life” were not to be opened? To judge is, among other things, to compare; to compare the life of the Heathen with the law of Nature, of the Jew with the law of Moses, of the Christian with the law of Jesus. The elliptical form of the expression here, points to the book of which we

¹ βιβλίον δλλο.

speak: “another book, which is of life”; or, of *the* life.

Thirdly, there is one more book, spoken of by the seer, elsewhere, and in another part of the New Testament, by a fellow apostle; it is “the Lamb’s book of life,” or simply, “the book of life”: but in the latter case, the connection will shew that it is the same book that is intended as in the former. It is referred to in the last verse of this chapter, in such a way, as that it is impossible to confound it with “the book of life,” in the text. It is the book, in which, St. Paul tells us, were “the names of Clement, and others of his fellow labourers.”¹ It is the book in which are the names of all who will be found worthy to live for ever with God, and in the eternal society of His Son. In this book are the title-deeds of the inheritance of “the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” It is this “book of life” that gives “right” to “the tree of life,”² insomuch that in the last chapter of this Revelation, the last verse but two in the Bible, what is translated “book of life,” is literally “tree of life.”³ They who have no part in the one are those who will have no part in the other.

¹ Phil. iv. 3.

² Ch. xxii. 19.

³ द्वारा.

Are our names, dear brethren, in this “Lamb’s book of life”? We cannot have the book from heaven to see; still, we can arrive at some sort of conclusion about the matter, though we never saw it. Do we *wish* our names to be there? Are we *striving* that there they shall be? Whether our names be or be not in “the book life,” depends upon “the book of” our lives. What does *it* say? Does it offer any evidence that we desire to be, or that we should be happy if we were, “for ever with the Lord”? Are we living a life of faith? Are we seeking to transform this lower life by love? Do we know what that life is which is “hid with Christ in God”?¹ While our life is inner, are its outer tokens such, as all the world may see? “The Lamb’s book of life” is for those that are like the Lamb: if we be like Him, our names are there: if not, the book of our own life, without His, will shew to saints and angels, our dissimilitude.

¹ Colossians iii. 3.

THE END.

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